

THE GRANGE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 61

EDITOR: CONNIE MASTERS

NOVEMBER 1995

From Flo

It has been a great fall. The Grange has been painted on the exterior and looks absolutely beautiful. Do take a stroll in the park and enjoy the house in all its grandeur. It is rather exciting.

It has been a great fall for all sorts of reasons.

We had a well attended in-depth training session for new volunteers in September; had two excellent speakers, Marta O'Brien and Wm. Gilpin at our Enrichment Dinners; the Junior Committee honoured us by having its first meeting of the season in the Music Room and we celebrated Jean Gray's great contribution to The Grange with a tea on Oct. 30th. School tours and Daily Pursuits are well under-way and our Discourse and Dessert series began with a lively and informative talk on the Volunteer Committee's restoration of The Grange by Mary Alice Stuart. Unfortunately the second lecture was cancelled because Peter Stokes was ill. It will be rescheduled to November 23rd.

The greatest news is that the Art Gallery of Ontario is going to honour Harriette Boulton Smith by placing a replica of our bust in George Weston Hall. At last, Harriette is going to be recognized as the first donor of the Gallery. What a day for The Grange! The reception and unveiling are on Thursday, December 7th at 5:45 pm. You are all invited. Having circled December 7th in your calendar, be sure to mark: Nov. 9 and 23 for Discourse and Dessert; Nov. 20 for the Enrichment Dinner and Dec. 10 for An Evening of Heavenly Sounds. And any time after Dec. 5, we hope to see you, your family and friends enjoying The Grange all decked out in its Christmas finery.

Starting this month, a new systematic volunteer-in-training program is going to be introduced. It is a tool to be used by every shift to ensure that every new volunteer is provided with the best learning opportunities. Since it is based on shared learning, all of you will be involved in the process at one time or another; therefore we would appreciate your suggestions and comments.

Comings & Goings

A warm welcome to:

Sunday - Linda Gagatsis
Diane Reid
Linda Thompson

Wed. Bridge - Alma Tanti

Thursday - Megan Barclay

Friday - Georgette Caldwell

Research - Robert Grasely
Diana Smyth

Housekeeping -
Catherine Stroud
Morris Fine

We hope they will all find
pleasure and satisfaction in
their work at The Grange.

Goodbye to:

Karen Jackson, who has been a
Sunday stalwart for some time.
We are losing her to Art
Rental, who could offer her a
more flexible schedule. You will
really be missed, Karen, and
Mrs. Boulton says that there
will always be a place for you
at The Grange - and a penny
more a week in wages!

Sick List

Oops - she's done it again!
Poor Kay Kirker had just
returned to us after the
accident she had last spring
when she fell again, breaking
her other hip. Kay is at St.
John's Rehabilitation Hosp. 285
Cummer Ave. North York M2M 2G1.

Hospitalized Pat Robertson,
Wednesday Evening. Our best
wishes go to Pat for a speedy
return to good health.

ANNE MILLS

We received a note from Anne
Mills' daughter, Madeline, that
we thought all Grangers would
like to read:

"To all the dear people at The
Grange

Thank you so much for all of
the lovely flowers you have
always sent my mother in her
various times of need. I know
it always meant so much to her
to know that you were all
thinking of her.

I also appreciate and thank you
for all of your kindnesses to
my mother. She was my best
friend and all that you did for
her you did for me.

With love - Madeline"

DATES TO REMEMBER

DISCOURSE & DESSERT

RESCHEDULED

Peter Stokes' Lecture

November 23, 1995
2:00 pm

HURRAH FOR HARRIETTE!

Unveiling of Portrait
Bust

Thurs. Dec. 7, 1995
5:45 pm.
George Weston Hall

Reception to follow

THE END

we received a letter from you
of the 10th inst. and were
glad to hear of your
return to home.

At all the same we are
glad.

Thank you for your letter of the 10th
inst. and for the news of your
return to home. We are
glad to hear of your
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I am glad to hear of your
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THINGS TO DO

1. Plan to attend the "Hurrah for Harriette!" evening on Thursday, December 7 at 5:45 pm. when your editor's crusade reaches its triumphant conclusion with the unveiling of Harriette's portrait bust in Weston Hall. A reception in The Grange will follow. Our leader (Flo Morson) requests that all attending Grangers will grace the occasion by appearing in costume, and to think - it all started with a note in The Grange Newsletter of Feb. 1994, and the celebration of Harriette's birthday on the following March 24.

2. Get into the Christmas spirit and help decorate The Grange on Monday, December 4. Sign-up sheet on bulletin board in staff sitting room.

3. Get even deeper into the Christmas spirit and come to The Grange's "Evening of Heavenly Sounds" on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4:30 pm. Please see last page of Newsletter for complete details.

4. Elvira Putrus, Grange Special Events, needs help with the "Evening of Heavenly Sounds". Costumed volunteers to serve shortbread and cider at intermission, and to take tickets at the door. Please see sign-up sheet on staff room bulletin board.

5. **ATTENTION** all volunteers - another **ENRICHMENT** evening planned for Monday, Nov. 20, at 5:30 pm. Guest speaker will be Eleanor Darke, author of a new book on Todmorden Mills, one of our sister historic sites. Grange volunteers should make every effort to attend enrichment events as they are an important part of the continual learning process that is the mark of a good historical interpreter.

DID YOU KNOW?

- the significance of "Norway" in the name of the east end Toronto Anglican church, St. John's Norway? In 1834 the Norway Steam Saw Mills were established near the present intersection of Woodbine Avenue and Kingston Road, and they advertised that Norway pine was a specialty. A village called Norway grew up around the crossroads and the mill, which included stores, taverns, hotels and an Anglican church, St. John's Norway. This year St. John's is celebrating its 145th birthday.

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON ARTIFACTS
IN THE GRANGE

As Newsletter readers know, from time to time your editor offers words of wisdom on artifacts in The Grange which she hopes you all read avidly and commit to memory. Here follows a few paragraphs on George Theodore Berthon, the artist who created The Grange's best portraits.

In January, 1845, one of the business cards appearing in local Toronto newspapers read:

Mr. Berthon (from London)
 Portrait Painter,
 at Mrs. Ganton's, Market St.

This announced the arrival in Toronto of George Theodore Berthon, probably the first classically trained, professional artist to work in the city. Previously the field had been left largely to itinerant painters from the United States and England.


Berthon was born in 1806 into an artistic French family. His father was one of Napoleon's court painters and a sister later became a noted miniaturist. Berthon showed an early aptitude for portrait painting and studied with his father and in various European capitals. Somewhat surprisingly, in 1820 he moved to London for training in medicine, but soon realized this profession was not for him. We next hear of George installed in the house of Sir Robert Peel (later to be Prime Minister of Great Britain) as French and drawing tutor to Sir Robert's daughters.

By 1835, Berthon was sufficiently proficient as an artist to exhibit several

portraits at London's Royal Academy, and some landscapes at the British Institution. In spite of what appears to have been a successful career in London, in 1844 Berthon was on the move again, this time to Toronto. We do not know what prompted him to come to a city which, while not exactly a cultural wasteland, was not Paris on the Don. However, Berthon was provided with an invaluable aid to any newcomer to the city - a letter of introduction from Sir Robert Peel to Bishop John Strachan.

Client contact was quickly established, and in his first critical year in Canada Berthon is known to have completed a number of commissions. One portrait in particular established his reputation, that of Bishop Strachan now hanging in Trinity College at the U of T.

For an artist to survive, patronage was the name of the game, and Strachan's endorsement of Berthon opened up tremendous opportunities. Three months after his advertisement appeared in the newspapers, he had moved to a house on William Street, and in June moved his studio again to 36 Yonge Street. At the same address was the lawyer, Alexander Grant, who was responsible in securing Berthon's first Law Society commission for a portrait of Sir John Beverley Robinson, which now hangs over the fireplace in the library at Osgoode Hall. This was the first major undertaking of the artist's career, and it is said that Berthon regarded it as his finest work.



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Art Gallery of Ontario

Monumental in scale, the portrait projects an image of moral and intellectual superiority, of the sitter's fitness to uphold the British tradition of justice in the new world. It was a great success, winning for Berthon the patronage of the Robinson family and their circle.

The same year Berthon received a commission for one of his most charming and admired portraits, the Three Robinson Sisters. The artist was asked by the husband of Augusta and the fiances of Louisa and Emily, who were to be wed in a double ceremony, to paint a portrait of the young ladies as a surprise for Sir John and Lady Robinson. After the ceremony when the wedding party returned to the Robinson home the portrait was discovered set up on an easel in the entrance hall. The in-laws' delight was obvious in Robinson's letter of thanks to the artist:

"I cannot delay in thanking you for the very great pleasure which Mrs. Robinson and I have received from your charming picture, and we are extremely obliged to you for the zeal and interest with which you must have entered into the views of the conspirators in order to fulfil so happily what was so kindly planned. Our dear little girls are, as we think, faithfully and characteristically portrayed".

It is now, of course, one of the special possessions of The Grange.

More commissions followed Berthon's success with the Robinsons including Sir John's

nephew, William Henry Boulton, then mayor of Toronto. This is in the grand manner, like the portrait of the Chief Justice, conveying a sense of aristocratic authority, and reflecting his lifestyle and his status in society. In 1847, William Henry's new bride Harriette, was painted by Berthon, an intimate and charming portrait. By the year's end yet another Robinson commission came his way, a portrait of Lady Robinson and her daughter, Mary. All these portraits are, as we know, hung in The Grange.

In 1856, the Law Society of Upper Canada commissioned Berthon to paint a portrait of the retiring Chief Justice James Macaulay. This marked the beginning of a long association with Berthon and the Law Society. Over the next 35 years the artist completed 15 full length portraits of Chief Justices, 4 half-length portraits of Law Society treasurers, and 3 smaller portraits of early chief justices. These portraits are all hung in Osgoode Hall which is rather like a George Berthon Art Gallery. He also produced 20 portraits of former Governor Generals and Lieutenant Governors for the province of Ontario, and in the Senate Chamber in Ottawa are some of his portraits of early Speakers of the Senate.

Berthon lived in the days before Canada Council grants and other subsidies for artists, but in 1876 the Ontario government purchased a work by Berthon, "An Early Visitor", a study of his daughter and her dog which was

entered in the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia where it was awarded a gold medal. Its location today is unknown.

In spite of these successes, there were some thorns amongst the roses and Berthon's work was not universally admired in his new home. He painted in the "grand manner", usually placing his sitters in an elaborate setting with the standard props, following the sophisticated tradition of European portraiture. This was termed "bizarre" and "overdone" by some of the provincials in Toronto, accustomed as they were to the plain, "no-frills" type of portrait produced by the itinerant or the self-taught local artist.

Then there was the politics. It is difficult for us to imagine today how politicized every aspect of life was in 19th century Toronto. Because Berthon's early patron belonged to the Strachan-Robinson circle, any public commission he might apply for was opposed by their political opponents of the Reformist persuasion, if they were in a position to do so, and Reformist newspapers never failed to denigrate his work.

Nevertheless, when George Berthon died in 1892 at the age of 86, he had been able to sustain a successful career as an artist of almost 50 years duration in a place where half a century before he arrived had been little more than a wilderness.

CHRISTMAS AT HISTORIC HOUSES

The Toronto Historical Board's historic houses will present a variety of Christmas celebrations:

A Dickens Christmas
Colborne Lodge
November 14 - December 13.

An Edwardian Christmas
Spadina
December 1 - January 7.

A Victorian Christmas
Mackenzie House
December 1 - December 31.

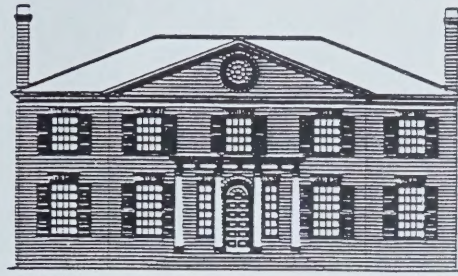
Special evening gaslight Christmas tours are offered at Spadina on Tuesday, December 5, 12 and 19, and at Mackenzie House, Thursday, December 7, 14 and 21.

The times for the tours at both houses are 7:00 or 8:00 pm.

Pre-registration is required - call 392-6827 ext. 265.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF GRANGE NEWSLETTER

Cleanliness (or lack of) in Upper Canada: a report on our grubby forebears prepared by Diana Smyth, a recent Grange recruit who is working with Grange Researcher, Avril Stringer.



AN INVITATION
TO AN EVENING OF HEAVENLY SOUNDS
FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON
AT
THE GRANGE

Amidst the glow of candlelight and the scent of pine The Grange Music Room will echo to the enchanting harmonies of Angelica Ottewill and Gail Brown, harp, flute and recorder, with the young voices of the Denlow Choristers in a program of seasonal music, choral and instrumental.

What better way to get into the spirit of the season than to join us for an evening of delightful music making. Hot mulled cider and Grange shortbread will be served at intermission.

It is recommended that tickets be ordered early as last year's concert with Angelica, Gail and the choristers sold out very quickly.

Sunday, December 10 at 4:30 pm.

Tickets: \$15 (including GST)

To order: call Program Registration 979-6608

For further information call The Grange 979-6660
ext. 337

